

Planning Matters



CITY OF COLUMBUS, MAYOR MICHAEL B. COLEMAN DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTOR MARK BARBASH

What's Inside SUMMER 2006

Administrator

The Public Review Process *page 1 page 2*

Near East Area Plan

Eastmoor Charette Process

Northwest Area Plan Update *page 1 page2*

Planning Division
109 N. Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
<http://development.columbus.gov>

From the Administrator

by Vince Papsidero, AICP

HELLO. Welcome to the first edition of *Planning Matters*, the quarterly newsletter of the city of Columbus Planning Division! We hope you find this of value as we inform the planning community about the activities, projects, and news regarding our division. The planning community is quite large in Columbus and involves neighborhoods and their leadership, civic organizations, developers and builders, land planners and designers, environmentalists, and the arts. Each quarter we hope to share with you what's been happening as our division seeks to make Columbus a great city, one neighborhood at a time.

MISSION. The Planning Division assists areas, neighborhoods, and corridors with local planning, assists in development project negotiations, provides assistance to other city divisions and departments on planning-related matters, and provides analysis and technical support to the Administration and City Council. All of our work is completed within the context of Mayor Michael B. Coleman's Columbus Covenant 2000, Development Department's mission, and the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

PROJECTS. A wide variety of projects, support for boards and commissions, and ongoing assignments define the work of the Planning Division. This first edition of *Planning Matters* highlights just a sample of our current projects. From the *Darby Accord Plan*, Job Centers Study, and the Retail Discussion Group to Whittier redevelopment, Rocky Fork Panel, and *Weinland Park Neighborhood*

Plan, the division is engaged in a variety of planning-related activities throughout the city.

PERSONNEL. The division has gone through several personnel changes over the past year and our staff is in a rebuilding mode. Long-time administrator, Steve McClary, retired from the Division last year after a very successful career. Under Steve's leadership, many plans and policies were adopted that have helped to shape and guide the growth of our city. Among his most notable accomplishments are the city's first multi-jurisdictional plans, such as the *Rocky Fork-Blacklick Accord* and the adoption of the *Columbus Comprehensive Plan* – the city's first and only comprehensive plan. Other staff who have left the city include Beth Clark, AICP; Suzanne Vais, AICP; David Hall, AICP; Jane Turley; and Craig Noreen. We are pleased to welcome planner Christine Palmer, formerly with the City of Delaware; urban designer Daniel Ferderlman, AIA, a practicing architect recently transplanted from San Francisco; and planner Devayani Puranik, a recent OSU graduate and architect who interned at the City of Westerville. Joining us for the summer is Glenn Taylor, undergraduate student of Geography from Wittenberg University. Look for further additions to our staff later this year!



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What's Inside SUMMER 2006

Administrator

The Public
Review Process
page 1 page 2

Near East Area Plan

Eastmoor
Charette Process

Northwest Area
Plan Update
page 1 page 2

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The Public Review Process: Partnering with Architectural Design

by Ken Klare

Though conceived from creativity and intuition, architectural design inherently involves an evolutionary process. However, architectural design can also benefit from a process that allows, receives, and responds to external influences and varied perspectives.

In conjunction with an improvement plan for High Street in the University District, City Council established the University Area Review Board to be a partner in that design process. Currently, the seven-member body consists of four architects, two developers, and a long-time resident. With the aid of extensive development and design guidelines, the Review Board and developers work together to obtain the most appropriate development for all concerned.

The Urban Design Section of the city's Planning Division also plays a role in the architectural design process by providing direction and design assistance to applicants as well as staff support to the Review Board. Many factors can influence a design, such

as: site constraints, program requirements, budget, codes, as well as input from the owner, tenant, financier, Review Board, city officials and staff, community, and/or the end user. Whether through the architect's design process or that of public review, such design permutations morph an initial concept into a final form acceptable to all interested parties. The example shown here illustrates the progression and visual results of such influences.

Epic Properties proposed a new, one-story, single-tenant commercial building on the northwest corner of Lane and High streets. Various schemes were put forth by Tim Bass of Bass Studio Architects. In addition to the building's 'fit', other determinants included: how the building addresses the corner; its appearance from the west; its presence along Lane Avenue; and the need for mass, height, and multi-floor use.

More than three years before final design approval, the architect presented the design shown in Illustration A to the property owner.



Illustration A: One of several designs initially proposed by the architect that responds to the adopted Development Guidelines for a multi-story, mixed-use development at this prominent corner location.

B1



B2



Illustrations B 1 & B 2. These early one-story schemes were intended to offer extreme paradigmatic designs.

Planning Matters



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What's Inside SUMMER 2006

Administrator

The Public Review Process *page 1 page 2*

Near East Area Plan

Eastmoor Charette Process

Northwest Area Plan Update *page 1 page 2*

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The Public Review Process: Partnering with Architectural Design continued

Though consistent with the public development guidelines, the multi-floor building exceeded the owner's program. To establish a design direction, the next designs offered a range of appearances. The tenant offered their idea as shown in Illustration C. With its one-story use being contrary to the adopted Development Guidelines, the Review Board requested they reconsider a larger building. Although subsequent designs reflect a single-user, a sincere effort was made to address the key concerns.

The schemes incorporate a vertical element to suggest mass, accent the corner, and landmark its presence. The approved design, as shown in Illustration F, uses the tower element to not only allow the building to respectfully acknowledge the corner in an interesting way, but also define the entry plaza as a gathering place. Details such as a community bulletin board reinforce this "public" space. The open terrace on both the ground floor and second floor will foster animation along Lane Avenue. Hopefully, as the user, Buffalo Wild Wings, makes it their own and installs signage, one should expect added vibrancy and character.

Given the architect/client constraints, the public design review process provides a forum which allowed other perspectives to temper and balance the final design as one sustainable and beneficial to all in the years to come.

Illustration C: Submitted design from tenant.



Illustration D: This initial design incorporating a second-floor use was thought to look too institutional.



Illustration E: An early 'tower' design providing an interior and exterior second-floor space.



Illustration F: Schematic design approved by the Review Board.



Planning Matters



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What's Inside SUMMER 2006

Administrator

The Public Review Process

[page 1](#) [page 2](#)

Near East Area Plan

Eastmoor Charette Process

Northwest Area Plan Update

[page 1](#) [page 2](#)

Planning Division
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Near East Area Plan

by Mark Dravillias

The Near East Side was the home to Columbus' early "upper crust" and Columbus' "Bronzeville" neighborhood, an African American "city within a city". Then and now, the Near East Side is a diverse, vibrant neighborhood. The *Near East Area Plan*, adopted by City Council on September 19, 2005, is a roadmap to guide the continued revitalization and redevelopment of the Near East Side. The plan's Development Strategy prioritizes the development of the Near East Side's historic commercial districts, which serve as the "visible edges" of the area. Focusing development on the visible edge of the neighborhood is analogous to enhancing a home's curbside appeal to improve its market value. The plan suggests that after development is sparked at the area's visible edges, revitalization will be enhanced throughout the neighborhood. Additionally, the historic commercial districts provide an opportunity for economically viable high-density new urban development that will enhance the potential for new retail at the specified commercial nodes.

The plan provides design guidelines for commercial districts, housing, and East Broad Street. These guidelines provide criteria to ensure compatible new commercial and residential development, yet encourage contemporary expression. The East Broad Street design guidelines seek to maintain the "look and feel" of the thoroughfare, one of Columbus' most beautiful streets. This section of the plan strongly discourages the demolition of contributing buildings and provides guidelines for new construction.



The plan's implementation element includes a development review checklist that serves as a guide for reviewing a proposed development for consistency with the plan. The checklist is intended to allow stakeholders to evaluate development proposals against the plan's specific guidelines and recommendations. This should streamline the decision-making process, enhance neighborhood communication, and maximize the potential for plan implementation.

One exciting implementation effort will be a design charrette for East Main Street, a proposal of the Near East Side's Linwood Wilson South of Main Blockwatch. This charrette, a cooperative effort of the neighborhood, Columbus Neighborhood Design Center, and Columbus Planning Division, took place in early July at the Central Community House on East Main Street. It detailed the Near East Area Plan's recommendations for East Main Street and served as a development plan for this strategic district.

Planning Matters



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What's Inside SUMMER 2006

Administrator

The Public Review Process *page 1 page 2*

Near East Area Plan

Eastmoor Charette Process

Northwest Area Plan Update *page 1 page 2*

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Eastmoor Charrette Process

by Daniel Thomas

The Planning Division and the Eastmoor Civic Association teamed up to do neighborhood design charrettes of Broad Street and Main Street in Eastmoor – that section of Columbus located between Bexley and Whitehall. Like many commercial corridors in the inner-city and first tier suburbs, these mile-long stretches, have seen economic, demographic and physical challenges.

The term charrette is borrowed from the design cramming done at architecture schools at the end of a term. In other words, an accelerated, time intensive design process.

In mid May design charrettes took place for Broad Street and Main Street, respectively, at the Fairmoor United Presbyterian Church on James Road. Council members Maryellen O'Shaughnessy and Mary Jo Hudson attended and gave brief talks. The initial two charrettes focused on issue clarification and participant identification of "good" and "bad" aspects of the physical environment. The Planning Division staff is in the process of preparing for subsequent charrettes that will lead to design solutions and implementation strategies.



Charrette participants identify Main Street's problems and opportunities



One of the sixteen maps that participants used to write comments and mark with dots –green for "good", red for "bad"

Planning Matters



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What's Inside SUMMER 2006

Administrator

The Public Review Process

page 1 page 2

Near East Area Plan

Eastmoor Charette Process

Northwest Area Plan Update

page 1 page 2

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Northwest Plan Update

by Lori Baudro, AICP

In early 2005 an advisory committee was established to update the provisions of the *Northwest Plan*, which was originally adopted by Columbus City Council in 1991. Located between the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers, the northwest planning area is a unique section of the city, sharing jurisdictional boundaries with three cities --Worthington, Dublin and Upper Arlington and three townships --Perry, Sharon and Liberty. As a result, the advisory committee consisted of representatives from the major civic associations, business interests, as well as government officials from the City of Columbus and neighboring jurisdictions.

The main goal of the Plan is to provide recommendations and direction to improve the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors of the area. Major recommendations center on the following themes:

- Infill development – ensuring that new development is compatible with the existing physical environment;
- Commercial/office redevelopment – providing development standards, including graphic standards to increase the quality of commercial development as change occurs;
- State Route 161(SR161) – providing a clear concept to guide change in terms of roadway improvement and land use character;



- Sidewalks and bike paths – recommending a master plan to link residents to schools, parks, libraries and shopping;
- Parks – providing additional park space and preserving natural resources; and

Planning Matters



CITY OF COLUMBUS, MAYOR MICHAEL B. COLEMAN DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTOR MARK BARBASH

What's Inside SUMMER 2006

Administrator

The Public Review Process

page 1 page 2

Near East Area Plan

Eastmoor Charette Process

Northwest Area Plan Update

page 1 page 2

Planning Division
109 N. Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
<http://development.columbus.gov>

Northwest Plan Update

- City services – providing a level of service that is compatible with the needs of the area.

Much of the Northwest area is already developed with a mix of single-family and multi-family uses, major commercial corridors and The Ohio State University Airport, which is a significant institutional use. Because the only major redevelopment potential exists along State Route 161, the corridor was a particular focus of the Advisory Committee. Visual preference surveys were used to rank the community's preferences of a variety of land use types and roadway improvements for this corridor. Guiding principles were established for 300 acres OSU owns on the south side of SR 161 -- the university intends to develop a master plan for the land within the next several years. As well, land use recommendations were developed for Linworth and the nearby 40-acre redevelopment site, referred to as Linworth Village Neighborhood.

The boundaries of the planning area are the Franklin-Delaware County line on the north, Scioto River on the west, Henderson Road on the south, and the Olentangy River on the east.

A draft of the Plan has been posted to the city's website at <http://td.ci.columbus.oh.us/Bizdevelopment/PlanList/index.asp>

